



Foreign Agricultural Service

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## **Sweden**

## **Biotechnology**

# **Swedish Farmers Surveyed on Attitudes on Growing Genetically Engineered Crops 2003**

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### **Report Highlights:**

**More than 50 percent of Swedish farmers who cultivate more than 50 hectares of land are positive towards growing genetically engineered crops, according to an on-going research study of Swedish farmers.**

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Includes PSD changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
Stockholm [SW1], SW

According to a survey called "Sveriges Lantbruk" (Sweden's Agriculture), more than 50 percent of Swedish farmers with holdings of more than 50 hectares of arable land are positive towards growing genetically modified (GM) crops. This survey is an ongoing project conducted by the private company, Business Research Institute (NUI), since 1973 at the request of various agricultural organizations and companies in Sweden.

The survey showed that farm size and age were the most significant factors affecting the attitude towards growing GM crops. The bigger the farm, the more positive the attitude. Likewise, the younger the farmer, the more positive the attitude. Farmers under the age of 40 with holdings of more than 50 hectares of arable land were most positive towards growing GM crops. Holdings of more than 50 hectares of arable land account for more than two thirds of total arable land in Sweden, which means that about 30 percent (or 800,000 hectares) of Sweden's arable land could potentially be planted with GM crops in the future. Moreover, farmers who are now under 40 will cultivate 80 percent of Swedish arable land in ten years.

The survey also revealed that the term "genetically modified" elicits negative responses from many farmers. However, when the terminology "modern plant breeding" was used instead, more than 80 percent of farmers with holdings of more than 50 hectares were positive towards growing GM crops.

The survey results are indicative of the desire of many farmers to take advantage of genetic engineering technology once they have the opportunity to do so. For the time being, however, they must await an end to the EU moratorium on approvals of new genetically engineered varieties and an EU decision on traceability and labeling.